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October 23, 1962

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: MREM's in Europe

I. Introduction

1. The Problem. To determine how MREM's could be deployed in the European area so as to offset Soviet deployment of MREM's in Cuba.

2. Timing

(a) Missile. The Air Force says that the first ten Missile "X" MREM's could be available in December, 1966. The Navy has said that A-2 Polaris MREM's could be produced within 26 months of the decision to do so, if that decision were made before July 1965.

(b) Carrier. Merchant ships to carry MREM's could be made available within much less than the 26 months required to produce A-2. Submarines to carry MREM's would take about 41 months to produce.

(c) Conclusion. The most rapid mode of deploying MREM's in the European area thus would probably be Polaris in merchant ships, and would probably have a target date of early 1965. Any use of Polaris submarines or missile Z would mean deferral until at least 1966.

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III. European Force

10. Prospect. An alternative means of proceeding would be to try to move soon on the multilateral ship-based NREM force which we are now discussing in NATO.

(a) Acceptance. The Germans, Italians, Belgians, and Turks are favorable to such a force. So are the Canadians. It is quite possible that we could get a fairly early decision from these countries to go ahead with such a force, if the US posture became one of positive leadership.

(b) US Involvement. To get such quick action, the US would have to participate initially. There might be an understanding that the European countries could buy us out later, if it was then desired to convert the force into a European force.

(c) Control. The initial participants would not have to solve the problem of how the force was to be controlled in order to get the initial decision to set up the force; the Germans have indicated that they would be prepared to accept US warhead custody as a transitional measure, while long-term control arrangements were being hammered out.

(d) Financing. The German, Italian, US, and other financial contributions would probably be sufficient to meet initial costs of a modest force, e.g., 10 ships and 80 missiles (as contrasted with the 25 ship-200 missile force we have been discussing in NATO).

(e) UK and France. Once it was clear that the force was actually being created, the UK might participate and make a contribution. Laloy has indicated that French participation, at least on a token basis, should not be excluded if we did not insist - as we would not - on France's abandoning its national program.

11. Timing. The force could probably be set up at least as soon as a French force.

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